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SUBJECT: USNATO GUIDANCE: NATO REFORM, SENIOR I.S.
POSITIONS

REF: USNATO 249

Classified By: EUR/RPM DIRECTOR BRUCE TURNER, REASON 1.4 (B/D)

¶1. (C) Washington has reviewed reftel and wants to be supportive of the NATO SYG's proposal in principle, although we need additional time to explore in more detail the implications of this proposed reform. The USG heartily endorses NATO Headquarters reform in order to ensure that the Alliance (and the next SYG) has the necessary tools and resources to modernize NATO to meet 21st century challenges.

¶2. (C) While the principle of a fully merit-based system for senior jobs on the NATO International Staff (I.S.) has considerable appeal, we have a number of questions as to how this system would work in practice. As such, we would need more time to study this issue and arrive at a fully cleared interagency position on this PO paper. Some of the concerns we would want to address, not necessarily through formal understandings, including the following:

-- The principle of open competition is a good one, but the basic fact is that a handful of Allies pay the vast majority of NATO's costs, whether that be HQ budget, through common funding, or even more significantly, through operations.

-- Allies who pay a large share of the budget and who present well-qualified candidates should retain some rights to a minimum quota of positions. If not legacy positions, perhaps we should insist on some legacy numbers.

-- Even if we were to abandon legacy positions in general, there may also be instances where a particular nation is best suited to staff a particular position. Security and intelligence come to mind, and there may be others such as defense acquisitions. We would need assurances from the Secretary General that he would be willing to take such considerations fully into account.

-- We should make it clear to the NATO Secretary General (and his replacement) that the USG must/must be represented at senior-levels (A6 and above) at a level at least roughly commensurate with the level of our financial contributions (21.74 percent). (Note: The U.S. currently occupies 9 of the top 37 positions; 8 positions would be considered an absolute floor. End note).

-- Moreover, on the practical side, we are not yet convinced that this new policy will increase the quality of our applicant pool; it could also prove more difficult given time lags inherent within current USG personnel systems and the difficulty of convincing FSOs in particular to bid on positions if the outcome is uncertain.

¶3. (C) We concur with USNATO that we should make every effort to link our potential support to getting our I.S. representation for A5 level and below positions increased to a level consistent with our NATO civil budget cost share (21.74 percent). Moreover, if new senior-level positions are

added during the course of NATO reform, the USG would reserve the right to submit highly-qualified candidates for those positions.

¶4. (C) The Intelligence Community (IC) has no direct equity in the broader goals of this NATO reform, but believes the disproportionate U.S. contribution of intelligence to NATO and to the NATO Office of Security (NOS) -- and the extent to which intelligence and military support are inextricably tied -- justifies keeping the NOS Director position in U.S. hands. The USG and IC's ability to influence the work of NOS would be significantly constrained without a highly-cleared U.S. official in the director position, especially if successors come from countries without a track record of robust intelligence and counter-intelligence capabilities. In addition, the IC would appreciate greater clarity on how job descriptions/criteria will be developed, and whether this exercise might be extended to the International Military Staff (IMS). To that end, the ODNI has quickly pulsed the IC on the NATO proposal and would appreciate USNATO efforts to ensure that the IMS AD/INT position continues to stay in U.S. hands due to the substantial U.S. intelligence activity and assistance the U.S. provides to NATO, and the intelligence-sharing challenges that leadership under another country could present.

¶5. (SBU) Washington would appreciate more information from the Mission on how these concerns might be addressed before taking a final position.

CLINTON